

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

We claim:

CLAIM 1 (currently amended):

1. A method of delivering a plurality of data messages to a customer at a customer station, comprising the steps of:
  - if the customer station is idle, delivering a message directly to the customer station;
  - if the customer station is busy receiving another message, determining a precedence level for a received message, and storing the received message in storage associated with that precedence level;
  - if the customer station is busy receiving said another message, notifying the customer that said message is being received by a system for storing received messages; and
  - if said customer, responsive to said notifying, signals for immediate delivery of said message to said customer station, immediately delivering said message to said customer station;
- subsequently, when the customer station is idle, delivering messages to the customer station from storage of higher precedence level before delivering messages from storage of lower precedence level.

CLAIM 2 (currently amended):

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein certain classes of messages also have a preemption level, wherein if said customer station receives a message with a preemption level, the reception of said another message is interrupted if the precedence level of the received message is above a precedence level of said another message currently being received by the customer, unless the customer, responsive to said notifying, signals for a deferral of delivery of said message.

CLAIM 3 (canceled)

CLAIM 4 (canceled)

CLAIM 5 (original):

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of notifying comprises the step of:  
notifying only if the received message is at or above a pre-determined precedence level.

CLAIM 6 (canceled)

CLAIM 7 (currently amended):

7. Apparatus for delivering a plurality of data messages to a customer station, comprising:  
means, responsive to recognizing that the customer station is idle, for delivering a message directly to the customer station;  
means, responsive to recognizing that the customer station is busy receiving another message, for determining a precedence level for a received message, and for storing the received message in storage associated with that precedence level;  
means, responsive to recognizing that the customer station is busy receiving said another message, for notifying ~~the a~~ customer at said customer station that said message is being received by a system for storing received messages; and  
said customer, responsive to said notifying, operating signaling means for requesting immediate delivery of said message to said customer station;  
means for, subsequently, when the customer is idle, delivering messages to the customer station from storage of higher precedence level before delivering messages from storage of lower precedence level.

CLAIM 8 (currently amended):

8. The apparatus of Claim 7, wherein certain classes of messages also have a preemption level, wherein if said customer station receives a message with a preemption level, the reception of said another message is interrupted by said mean for delivering messages if the precedence level of the received message is above a precedence level of said another message currently being received by the customer station, unless the customer, responsive to said notifying, signals for a deferral of delivery of said message.

CLAIM 9 (canceled)

CLAIM 10 (canceled)

CLAIM 11 (previously presented):

11. The apparatus of Claim 7, wherein the means for notifying comprises means for notifying only if the received message is at or above a pre-determined precedence level.

CLAIM 12 (canceled)